

GREENDALE HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE

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http://www.edlinesites.net/pages/Greendale_High/Theatre

January 14, 2015

Chairman Tom Wheeler
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
c/o Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Comments in ET Docket No. 14-165 and GN Docket Nos. 12-268 and 14-166 via Electronic Filing

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners Clyburn, Rosenworcel, Pai, O'Rielly and Ms. Dortch:

On behalf of Greendale High School Theatre, Greendale, Wisconsin, I write with concern about protection for our wireless microphones and backstage communications devices.

Greendale High School Theatre uses wireless microphones in the presentation of over 13 public performances of four or five different theatre productions each year, with more than 5,000 attendees annually. In addition, the Greendale Community Theatre presents a dozen or more public performances of two different musical theatre productions each year in our High School Auditorium. Also, we regularly use wireless microphones for all of our school assemblies, large public meetings (including public information sessions by our elected representatives), orientations, annual school board meetings and other public uses. Our Auditorium is rented to the public for many other performance events, all of which use wireless microphones.

Our school theatre program relies on the revenue generated in these performances, and our District relies on the other related revenue, to sustain and grow our in- and after-school theatre education opportunities for all of our 920 students and for the residents of our community. Wireless microphones are a fundamental aspect of our program, and understanding how to use them a critical component of our educational pedagogy, both for student performers and technicians. Sound design and implementation is a unit in my Stage Craft Class and students design and run our sound system on a year-round basis.

I understand the Commission has ruled that performing arts entities that regularly use 50 or more wireless devices will be eligible to apply for a Part 74 license. I've also learned that the FCC is seeking comment on a proposed rule that would prevent performing arts entities using fewer than 50 wireless devices from participating in the database. This would leave my school, our District, our community, and thousands of others without any interference-protection mechanism from the many TV Band Devices that may soon flood the market. Frequency coordination with other known wireless microphone users has become common practice, but there is no way to coordinate with TVBD's if one is unaware of them.

We are a member of the Educational Theatre Association (EdTA), the national voice of theatre education that includes more than 5,000 educators and 90,000 student members. The mission of EdTA is to provide theatre education opportunities for all students. Thousands of performances are held by both educational and professional performing arts organizations each year. The use of wireless microphones is essential to producing high-quality performances.

Per the FCC's request for Public Comment, here are the details about our school's use of wireless devices:

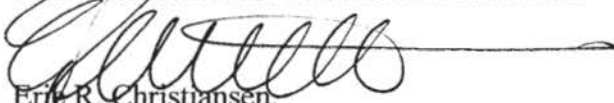
We use digital wireless microphones (system capacity is 20 wireless devices) in every event in our auditorium. This can be every week of the school year, and, many times, multiple days in each week. For the three to four musical theatre productions on our stage (one to two by the High School, two by the Community Theatre), we routinely max out our system capacity and, in addition, are mic-ing the up to 20 pit orchestra musicians with additional wired system capacity. We could not produce theatre under modern conditions (training our students, serving our audiences) without wireless microphone capacity.

We continuously upgrade our sound capabilities, having spent over \$100,000 to replace our entire wireless sound system in 2009-10, the last time the FCC changed the spectrum available to us. Since then, we have invested another \$75,000 in new speakers for our Auditorium.

I appreciate that the Commission has sought comment on these very important issues. I realize that the FCC is seeking a fair and reasonable solution to the TV Band issues we are now facing, but that solution should allow *all* organizations—big and small, professional and educational—some sort of interference protection. The currently proposed plan offers no such protection for many of us. Further, I would request that the Commission consider the burden already borne by the educational and performing arts community, including my own school, in vacating the 700 MHz band. I am concerned about the cost of once again replacing my school's sound equipment without having the money to do so.

Theatre education programs are cornerstones of many schools' cultural identity, nurturing 21st-century skills and knowledge for students and providing pride, entertainment, and dialogue in the communities, and contributing to our local economies. I respectfully request that the Commission maintain access to interference protection and, if caused by spectrum availability issues, establish a mechanism to reimburse educational and performing arts organizations for the cost of new equipment prompted by any proposed spectrum move.

Sincerely,
GREENDALE HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE



Eric R. Christiansen,
Director

cc: Representative Paul Ryan
Wisconsin Senators Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin